

IELTS Reading Tests

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 16–30, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

LOCKED DOORS, OPEN ACCESS

The word, "security", has both positive and negative connotations. Most of us would say that we crave security for all its positive virtues, both physical and psychological—its evocation of the safety of home, of undying love, or of freedom from need. More negatively, the word nowadays conjures up images of that huge industry which has developed to protect individuals and property from invasion by "outsiders", ostensibly malicious and intent on theft or wilful damage.

Increasingly, because they are situated in urban areas of escalating crime, those buildings which used to allow free access to employees and other users (buildings such as offices, schools, colleges or hospitals) now do not. Entry areas which in another age were called "Reception" are now manned by security staff. Receptionists, whose task it was to receive visitors and to make them welcome before passing them on to the person they had come to see, have been replaced by those whose task it is to bar entry to the unauthorized, the unwanted or the plain unappealing.

Inside, these buildings are divided into "secure zones" which often have all the trappings of combination locks and burglar alarms. These devices bar entry to the uninitiated, hinder circulation, and create parameters of time and space for user access. Within the spaces created by these zones, individual rooms are themselves under lock and key, which is a particular problem when it means that working space becomes compartmentalized.

To combat the consequent difficulty of access to people at a physical level, we have now developed technological access. Computers sit on every desk and are linked to one another, and in many cases to an external universe of other computers, so that messages can be passed to and fro. Here too security plays a part, since we must not be allowed access to messages destined for others. And so the password was invented. Now correspondence between individuals goes from desk to desk and cannot be accessed by colleagues. Library catalogues can be searched from one's desk. Papers can be delivered to, and received from, other people at the press of a button.

And yet it seems that, just as work is isolating individuals more and more, organizations are recognizing the advantages of "team-work"; perhaps in order to encourage employees to talk to one

another again. Yet, how can groups work in teams if the possibilities for communication are reduced? How can they work together if e-mail provides a convenient electronic shield behind which the blurring of public and private can be exploited by the less scrupulous? If voice-mail walls up messages behind a password? If I can't leave a message on my colleague's desk because his office is locked?

Team-work conceals the fact that another kind of security, "job security", is almost always not on offer. Just as organizations now recognize three kinds of physical resources: those they buy, those they lease long-term and those they rent short-term—so it is with their human resources. Some employees have permanent contracts, some have short-term contracts, and some are regarded simply as casual labour.

Telecommunication systems offer us the direct line, which means that individuals can be contacted without the caller having to talk to anyone else. Voice-mail and the answer-phone mean that individuals can communicate without ever actually talking to one another. If we are unfortunate enough to contact an organization with a sophisticated touch-tone dialling system, we can buy things and pay for them without ever speaking to a human being.

To combat this closing in on ourselves we have the Internet, which opens out communication channels more widely than anyone could possibly want or need. An individual's electronic presence on the internet is known as the "Home Page"—suggesting the safety and security of an electronic hearth. An elaborate system of 3-dimensional graphics distinguishes this very 2-dimensional medium of "web sites". The nomenclature itself creates the illusion of a geographical entity, that the person sitting before the computer is travelling, when in fact the "site" is coming to him. "Addresses" of one kind or another move to the individual, rather than the individual moving between them, now that location is no longer geographical.

An example of this is the mobile phone. I am now not available either at home or at work, but wherever I take my mobile phone. Yet, even now, we cannot escape the security of wanting to "locate" the person at the other end. It is no coincidence that almost everyone we see answering or initiating a mobile phone-call in public begins by saying where he or she is.

Questions 16–19

Choose the appropriate letters A–D and write them in Boxes 16–19 on your answer sheet.

16 According to the author, one thing we long for is ...

- A the safety of the home
- B security
- C open access
- D positive virtues

17. Access to many buildings ...

- A is unauthorised
- B is becoming more difficult
- C is a cause of crime in many urban areas
- D used to be called 'Reception'

18. Buildings used to permit access to any users, ...

- A but now they do not
- B and still do now
- C especially offices and schools
- D especially in urban areas

19. Secure zones ...

- A don't allow access to the user
- B compartmentalise the user
- C are often like traps
- D are not accessible to everybody

Questions 20–27

Complete the text below, which is a summary of paragraphs 4–6. Choose your answers from the **Word List** below and write them in Boxes 20–27 on your answer sheet.

There are more words and phrases than spaces, so you will not be able to use them all. You may use any word or phrase more than once.

Example:

The problem of _____ access to buildings

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Answer: physical

The problem of physical access to buildings has now been _____ 20 _____ by technology. Messages are sent between _____ 21 _____, with passwords not allowing _____ 22 _____ to read someone else's messages. But, while individuals are becoming increasingly _____ 23 _____ socially by the way they do their job, at the same time more value is being put on _____ 24 _____. However, e-mail and voice-mail have led to a _____ 25 _____ opportunities for person-to-person communication. And the fact that job-security is generally not available nowadays is hidden by the very concept of _____ 26 _____. Human resources are now regarded in _____ 27 _____ physical ones.

Word List

just the same way as	computer	cut-off
reducing of	computers	overcame
decrease in	combat	isolating
team-work	developed	physical
similar	other people	
no different from	solved	

Questions 28–30

Complete the sentences below. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in Boxes 28 – 30 on your answer sheet.

28. The writer does not like _____.
29. An individual's Home Page indicates their _____ on the Internet.
30. Devices like mobile phones mean that location is _____.